

FORTS THE FORT

The other area to be developed was the Fort area. Before the Civil War, most of Saquish belonged to Daniel Burgess who had become prosperous through his farming and fishing interests. He was a bachelor, and an ex-slave woman kept house for him. She is buried near the big rock on the Lowell property. Mr. Burgess accepted the government's offer to

purchase this part of Saquish for a fort, not without reluctance, we are told. He received one thousand dollars for the land, and one thousand dollars for loam which was removed from it. It was the highest point of Saquish, and commanded a wide view. The fort was appropriately named Fort Standish and was built to protect Plymouth in the Civil War. It was commanded by Captain Redman. Later, Sergeant Keefe came from Virginia to be in command. It being December, he considerably left his wife and six children in Plymouth until spring. He visited them occasionally during that winter, walking the nineteen miles.

Sargeant McGarry was in command of Fort Andrews, at the Gurnet. Mrs. Keefe and Mrs. McGarry assisted each other in childbirth, and it is said that on one of these occasions Mrs. McGarry fainted.

After the Civil War ended, the fort was no longer needed, and the buildings were sold. Sargeant Keefe, urged by his children wished to buy a house and settle in Saquish, but his wife firmly refused, and they returned to Plymouth. The buildings were bought by various people and moved to different sites. The house used as officers' headquarters was the largest, and has had several owners. It was bought by Samuel Burgess for \$75 and moved to the center of the island where it now stands. Joseph Thurston paid \$25 for the guard house and moved it to the front beach. The Pest House was sold for ten dollars and moved to the landing. It was eventually torn down. There used to be a boat house further down on the landing that was made from part of the barracks at the fort.

For many years the Fort, as it was still called, was left in its original state, and enjoyed as a pleasant spot from which to watch the boats and the ever changing ocean.

The government offered the area for sale eventually, and it was bought by Mr. Delano of Plymouth,

who subdivided it into building lots.

The Fort has many natural advantages, and I have heard that there are several attractive new cottages there now. As it is all privately owned, I do not know how extensively this development has progressed, but the first two owners, I am told, are Mr. and Mrs. Taylor and Mr. and Mrs. Brumit.

Fort Standish was not the first fort to be built in this vicinity. In 1776 a fort was built on the Gurnet to protect the towns of Plymouth, Kingston, and Duxbury. It was commanded by Captain William Weston, who had a force of sixty men.

In the War of 1812 a British warship anchored off the Gurnet, threatening the fishing fleet which was in the harbor. The fort soldiers fired on the ship and damaged it, which caused it to leave. In 1813, after the news of peace was received, seventy persons walked across the ice and celebrated.

A new fort named Fort Andrews, was built on the Gurnet during the Civil War - Captain Redman was in command of Fort Standish and Fort Andrews at this time.

EARLY RESIDENTS

I have written about the purchase of the Fort buildings and their removal to other spots on Saquish. One of these, now called the Oceana, was purchased from Joseph Thurston by Mrs. Harney who was born at this fort when her father was in command there. She was Caroline Keefe, and in later years she enjoyed many summers in her pleasant cottage with her family. She could truly be called an "early resident".

The Harlow family built their cottage on the front beach, high on the cliff, in 1909. Previous to that, they came over from Plymouth every summer, and lived in two tents. Their Plymouth home was the lovely Old Harlow House, one of the oldest in

Plymouth. Russ was a schoolboy then, and started a lobster business, which he carried on successfully until recently. His mother was very clever in coping with Saquish problems, even devising a method to keep out mosquitoes.

When Mrs. Harlow became ill, Edna Locus cared for her, and at her death Edna stayed on and kept house for Russ. She was a good neighbor and a good friend, always ready to help others. Her death in 1959 was deeply regretted by all who knew her.

Russ was often called the "Mayor of Saquish" and "Skipper", and his opinion was frequently sought in difficult situations. His judgment was good, and his decisions fair. He owned several cottages on the front beach, and built very fine dories. Because of poor health, he sold his Saquish property recently, and has spent his winters in Florida.

I have heard, very recently, that Russ passed on in the spring of 1964. To those of us who remember him as a healthy, robust man, always genial and ready to joke, this comes as a great shock. Saquish will not seem the same without him, and he will be missed, for he had the respect and good will of everyone.

The "Magnet" was built in 1910 by Mr. and Mrs. Howard Rushton and Mrs. Rushton's two brothers, Harry and Francis Clemons. They were all Saquish enthusiasts, and the house is still in the family. It belongs to Peggy Rushton Sayce and Barbara Clemons Sayce, who share their parents' love for Saquish. They have happy memories of long summers spent there with their brothers, David Clemons and Melvin and Cabot Rushton. Now the third generation enjoy it as they did.